

## **ISSUES BRIEF -- ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY: REWARD STRATEGIES KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION APRIL MEETING**

At its April meeting, the Kentucky Board of Education heard presentations and had discussions on a number of items relating to the state's assessment and accountability system.

### **Reward Strategies for Schools and Districts Meeting Goals Established by State and Federal Statutes and Regulations**

Under the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990, Kentucky's system of assessment and accountability have always included rewards and recognition for successful schools. The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 also requires recognition for successful schools.

Currently, KRS 158.6455 requires the Kentucky Board of Education to create and implement a system for identifying and rewarding successful schools to ensure school accountability for student achievement of the goals set forth in KRS 158.645 and 158.6451.

703 KAR 5:020 provides specifics for implementing school rewards or recognition. It states that in order for a school to receive any amount of rewards, a school must not only achieve the required performance level but must also:

- have a biennial dropout rate less than or equal to 5.3 percent or a dropout rate that is at least one-half of one percent lower than its dropout rate of the previous biennium. A school will not receive rewards if its dropout rate exceeds six percent.
- reduce the percent of novices on a schedule so that by the target biennium ending with 2014, the school shall have five percent or less of its students scoring in the novice range of performance.

### ***Rewards/Recognition in the State Dimension of the State Assessment and Accountability Program***

In the state dimension of Kentucky's state-required assessment and accountability program, if the above criteria are met, schools receive monetary rewards as follows:

#### **1. Pacesetter School**

The highest scoring five percent of all schools are designated as Commonwealth Pacesetter schools if they have met or exceeded the fourth point of recognition and if they meet the dropout rate and novice reduction requirements. If not otherwise receiving rewards in recognition for growth, a Commonwealth Pacesetter School receives one share of monetary rewards. To be classified as a Pacesetter School, a school shall not have declined in both of the two previous biennia. The rewards that may be due a school for having passed a higher point of recognition shall be given in addition to this amount.

#### **2. Meets Goal School**

A school classified as meets goal earns three shares of monetary rewards.

#### **3. Progressing School**

A school classified as progressing earns one-half share of monetary rewards.

#### **4. Passing a Recognition Point**

A special one-time reward amount is distributed to schools as they meet or exceed school recognition points. These schools receive one share of monetary rewards and other forms of recognition as determined by the Kentucky Board of Education for meeting or exceeding each school recognition point.

A local school district in which all schools are classified as progressing or meets goal under 703 KAR 5:020 and meet the dropout criteria established for schools in order to earn rewards in 703 KAR 5:020 will be declared an exemplary growth district and receives rewards as determined by the Kentucky Board of Education.

### ***Rewards/Recognition in the Federal Dimension of the State Assessment and Accountability Program***

As proposed in amendments to 703 KAR 5:020, in the federal dimension of the state-required assessment and accountability program, if the above criteria are met (i.e., dropout and novice reduction

requirements), a school can receive rewards or recognition as determined by the Department of Education if the school makes Adequate Yearly Progress for two consecutive years in both reading and mathematics as determined on an annual basis

### ***Types of Rewards/Recognition for Schools and Districts***

In previous biennia, schools were presented monetary rewards to be used for purposes determined by the schools.

However, the School Rewards Trust Fund has been de-funded by the state legislature, and if reward money for schools is not restored in the budget, reward money will not be distributed and rewards and recognition would need to take other forms.

In addition to monetary rewards distributed to schools at the end of the 2002 biennium, schools were recognized for passing a recognition point by the presentation of a colored flag to display on site. These Getting to Proficiency Flags have been awarded as follows:

- Recognition Point 1 (55) – white flag with one star
- Recognition Point 2 (66) – green flag with two stars
- Recognition Point 3 (77) – yellow flag with three stars
- Recognition Point 4 (88) – red flag with four stars
- Recognition Point 5 (100) – blue flag with five stars

### ***Recommendations for Rewards/Recognition Strategies for the 2004 Biennium***

Department of Education staff recommended to the Board that rewards and recognition for successful schools for performance in the 2004 biennium, which would be awarded in 2005, include the following:

- a continuation of the flag program for schools that pass the various recognition points
- special and appropriate certificates for Pacesetter, Meets Goal and Progressing schools, explaining their accomplishments, and a statewide KDE press release recognizing all of these schools
- special appropriate annual certificates for schools that meet Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act and a statewide KDE press release recognizing all of these schools
- if funding permits, a biennial recognition ceremony in Frankfort honoring all schools that have earned any of the above recognitions in the previous biennium
- visits to recognize schools by the commissioner of education to be conducted either locally or regionally, depending on feasibility

### ***Policy Issue***

Traditionally, good accountability systems have been thought of as having balance. If there are in fact negative consequences, then a sense of fairness within the educational community insists on positive rewards similar in meaning or magnitude. In times of tight budget situations, the board will have to search for ways to communicate its appreciation for performance in a manner that is similar in meaning to the perceived sanctions that are applied to a school for lack of performance.